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## Patient Information Leaflet

This leaflet answers some common questions about Cyclophosphamide. It does not contain all the available information. It also does not take the place of talking to your doctor or pharmacist.

### What is Cyclophosphamide?

Cyclophosphamide is a medication used in the treatment of nephritic syndrome and other autoimmune diseases. It belongs to a class of drugs known as immunosuppressants or alkylating agents.

Cyclophosphamide works by blocking the production of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) in cells, stopping cells from dividing and eventually leading to cell death. Some of the cells affected are immune cells which play an important role in nephritic syndrome and autoimmune diseases.

### When should it be taken?

Cyclophosphamide should preferably be taken in the morning when the bladder is voided more frequently. It should not be taken before going to bed.

### How should it be taken?

Cyclophosphamide is usually taken orally ONCE daily on empty stomach, either 1 hour before or 2 hours after food. It may be taken with or after food if gastric discomfort occurs. However, please inform your pharmacist or doctor if you are doing so.

As Cyclophosphamide may inflame the lining of the bladder, it is important to drink plenty of water to flush the bladder. 8 to 10 glasses of water a day is recommended.

Do not stop taking Cyclophosphamide unless you are told to do so by your doctor. Do not take more or less than required unless instructed.

### What should I do if I miss a dose?

If you forget a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If it is nearer to the time of your next dose, skip the missed dose. Do not take two doses at the same time.

### Safe Handling

To minimise drug exposure to other members of the family, the following methods of administration are recommended:

1. Place tablets onto a spoon dedicated for use with Cyclophosphamide and administer directly into the mouth. Avoid contact with fingers if possible and wash hands and the spoon thoroughly after taking Cyclophosphamide.
2. **Pregnant or breastfeeding women** are advised to wear gloves as extra precaution where possible.
3. For patients who are unable to swallow tablets whole, it is advised to wet the tablets for a few minutes before grinding them to minimise the inhalation of medication powder.

### What side effects can this medicine cause? What can I do about them?

You may experience the following side effects while on Cyclophosphamide. Tell your doctor if you encounter any of them so that adjustments to your therapy may be made to reduce the occurrence of these side effects where possible. These include:

- Hair loss
- Nausea and vomiting

Please inform your doctor if you experience any other side effects or if the side effects become severe and bothersome.

There are some potentially serious but rare side effects that may be experienced when you are using Cyclophosphamide. These include:

- Bone marrow suppression, manifested as sore throats, mouth ulcers, unexplained bruising/bleeding, unusual tiredness, infection or persistent fever
- Blood in the urine
- Increased risk of cancers, e.g bladder, lymph gland and skin

Stop using Cyclophosphamide and inform your doctor immediately if you experience any of the potentially serious side effects.

### **Drugs, supplements or food to avoid**

Some medication or food may reduce its efficacy, or increase its toxicity. Close monitoring is required when Cyclophosphamide is used together with the following medications:

1. Blood-thinning medications, e.g Warfarin
2. Some antibiotics, e.g Rifampicin, Ciprofloxacin, Erythromycin and Clarithromycin
3. Anti-HIV medications
4. Anti-fungal medications, e.g Ketoconazole and Voriconazole
5. Anti-epileptic medications, e.g Carbamazepine and Phenytoin
6. Live vaccines, such as BCG, MMR and some forms of polio or influenza vaccines
7. Grapefruit
8. St John's Wort
9. Echinacea

Do not give your child or yourself any other medications or herbal products without consulting your doctor or pharmacist.

**Disclaimer:** The list is not exhaustive, if in doubt, please inform your doctor or pharmacist especially if you are on any other medication or supplements when you are prescribed Cyclophosphamide.

### **Storage**

Store at a temperature below 25°C.

### **General Information**

#### **Compliance to follow up visits**

While taking Cyclophosphamide, you should be seeing your specialist doctor regularly to ensure that your treatment is optimized and to address any concerns relating to your treatment. Regular laboratory tests may be conducted as directed by your doctor.

#### **Supply of Drugs**

You are advised not to purchase more Cyclophosphamide than required before your next visit in case of dose changes or stoppage of medication.

#### **Proper Disposal**

You are advised to bring Cyclophosphamide to the pharmacy for proper disposal if you are to stop the drug permanently.

#### **Caregiver advice**

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, extra precaution should be taken when handling Cyclophosphamide as it may cause harm to the developing foetus or baby.

Do not give Cyclophosphamide to anyone else. It has been prescribed for a specific condition, may not be the correct treatment for another person, and would be dangerous if the other person is pregnant.